JAMES EARL RAY "FRAMED" FOR THE KILLING OF

AN exclusive interview WITH ART HANES SR·

RAY'S FIRST DEFENSE ATTORNEY

By JACK L. FROST

James Earl Ray was "set up and framed" for the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. so states the man who Ray fired as his legal counsel just two days before his scheduled trial for the murder of King was to have begun.

Arthur J. Hanes Sr. (better known as Art Hanes) who was Ray's first legal counsel after his arrest in London, on June 8, 1968, told "Read All About It" in an exclusive interview that "James Earl Ray just wasn't capable of doing it." Hanes said Ray was not capable of planning or knowing King's whereabouts at all times, tracking him, financing himself, and carrying out the act itself.

According to Hanes Ray was "without motive" and also "the man is just not a killer." He was simply "set up and framed." In other words in the view of his first legal counsel pertaining to the cased "It was a well planned, staged, and executed operation. Somebody had to know more than what Ray knew to do it." A criminal yes, an escaped convict yes, but a killer, no."

Hanes who is one of the foremost and most brilliant defense attorneys in the south, by reputation, is apparently, without question, thoroughly convinced in himself that Ray is not guilty. And, probably no one has had more access to the true facts and circumstances than Art Hanes. No one has really been more closely connected to the whole affair – from the beginning until now than Arthur J. Hanes Sr.

"James Earl Ray is an intelligent man, a highly intelligent man," Hanes told Read All About It. "But he was just not capable of doing all there was to do." This included the firing of the bullets into King's head as the marxist schooled civil rights leader stood on the balcony outside his room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tenn. on April 4, 1968.

It was as if he were expecting something to happen the way he looked as he awaited his fate that April night.

Following the shooting of King too many things happened which just seemed to be too conincidental. One was the appearance and description of Two White Mustangs in the same vicinity where the killing occurred and both were moving in opposite directions. It was as if one of the White Mustangs appeared as a deliberate decoy – to throw the police off.

Then the removal of the trees by the City of Memphis which were directly in the path of, and obstructed the view from the bathroom window from the rear of an adjacent building where the shots were supposedly fired from. These trees had stood for years but were not removed until a short time prior to Ray's first scheduled trial. To this day no one knows who actually gave the order for the trees where the actual assassin may have been to be removed.

On June 17, 1968, nine days after the James Earl Ray's capture in London, Art Hanes Sr. called a press conference in his law offices in the Frank Nelson buliding in downtown Birmingham.

This writer was at that historic press conference. He was sent by a Birmingham radio station that carried his syndicated new commentary "The Meaning of the News."

Never have I regretted doing

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MARTIN LUTHER KING

the favor for Peggy Ferebee, program director of WCRT who told me it would be worthwhile. There was no one available to go at the station and said Peggy, "When Art Hanes calls a news conference something's up. Something was up. And upon my arrival I found what it was.

Hanes had been contacted by a Mr. Michael Eugene of London who was the British Court appointed Counsel for Ray, who was using the name Ramon George Sneyd.

Eugene told Hanes, via telephone, this was on June 15, one week after Ray's arrest at the Heathrow Airport in London, that Ray, alias Sneyd had requested he contact two American attorneys for his defense.

The two lawyers named were F. Lee Bailey of Massachusetts, a brilliant (liberal) attorney and Arthur J. Hanes Sr. a brilliant (conservative) attorney.

Hanes told Read All About It that Michael Eugene told him that he had made contact with F. Lee Bailey, but that Bailey told him he "would not take the case unless Ray could convince him personally that he had not killed King" because he and King were good friends.

Since the circumstances surrounding Ray's arrest with his definite link to Memphis at the time of King's death were ready, made for guilt by association, the British court appointed attorney after talking with Ray, then contacted Hanes.

Following his press conference on June 17, Art Hanes Sr. and his law partner and son, Art Hanes Jr. left for Washington on June 19 to get their final necessary paper to go onto London to see their prospective client.

Art Hanes Sr. told Read All About It, "Art Jr. and I went the first time on June 19 and were denied access to Ray the first trip." Hanes then said, "I went alone twice more to London. Those dates were July 5, 1968, and "finally on July 15, 1968.

James Earl Ray was being kept in the Wandsworth Prison. He was "fearful" according to Hanes of leaving London, without his being with him to retun to the United States. Why? Was he afraid of another Jack Ruby – Lee Harvey Oswald occurence where a supposed "grieved citizen" up and shoots the "accused assassin" before he has been tried and proven guilty. A grieved citizen who just happened to have reported connections with Fidel Castro's maniac Communist regime in havana.

A strange and puzzeling thing about Art Hanes Sr. efforts to counsel with a

cont. on page 17

prospective client who had requested his services, was that the U.S. Justice Department, with the ultra-leftwing and Communist apologist, Ramsey Clark, as attorney general, refused to cooperate with Hanes and son in any way and actually provided every roadblock and obstacle possible to prevent their early counsel.

This great civil rights proponent, who has rarely if ever had anything good to say about our good ole USA, permitted the Justice Department to use a biased prejudiced and unconsitutional approach to Ray's being considered innocent until proven guilty in the King murder. Hanes said his only contact with Clark was when he wrote a letter to the friend of radical leftwing causes and asked permission to fly back to the states with Ray since he was in great fear of his life. The request was denied. Justice and civil rights – ha, ha, ha.

After James Earl Ray's return to the United States and to his jail cell in Memphis, Art Hanes began to prepare his defense. "There was no way they could have proved Ray quilty" said Hanes, and "The FBI ballistics test would have shown that it was not Ray's rifle that fired the fatal bullets into King's head. the findings an revelations of Hanes' would have shown and proven a definite conspiracy was involved in King's death.

However, Hanes' handling of the Ray defense was not to be. It was apparent and still remains so that a great number check spelling of people, high-up in the Echlons of government and in the media, did not want the American people to believe a conspiracy was possible.

Great efforts were made by these people including former Chief Justice Earl Warren to sell the American people that John Kennedy's and Martin Luther King's assassinations were done by crack-pot Killers. Include also the Ultra-liberal communist apologist Ramsey Clark in the number.

Strangely, somebody somewhere (high-up) only a few days prior to Ray's trial, in defiance of all legal ethics, got an attorney named Percy foreman of Houston, Texas, without Art hanes knowledge or approval into the cell of James Earl Ray, and there, according to Hanes who first related this to the writer in 1970, before Ray revealed it, Foreman pumped continuously into Ray that "You had better plead guilty you S.O.B. or their gonna fry you." This according to Hanes went on all weekend. Finally Ray broke and decided to plead guilty out of fear that if he didn't plead guilty and take the rap for the killing he was sure to be electrocuted.

The rest is history as far as this aspect goes at present but some strange questions remain! Who got Percy Foreman involved in the case and immediately before Ray's first scheduled trial? And, who got him into the jail cell of Ray without prior knowledge and consent of Art Hanes Sr. which is against any and all legal ethics and respect?

There's a dead cat in the woodpile somewhere - but the truth has got to come forth. Truth cannot be extinguished for truth is eternal. "Be sure your sins will find you out."

to be continued

Next issue who really killed Martin Luther King Jr. and why?